

Sixteen extraordinary women
Photographed by Rankin
Wearing steventai
An idea by Stephen Bell
All proceeds to Changing Faces

Press release
21 September 2018

CHANGING THE WAY YOU SEE : PORTRAIT POSITIVE
SERIES - 01

New Rankin portraits of women with disfigurements to feature in exclusive book to challenge the fashion industry's limited view of "beauty". Launch event to be hosted by Gail Porter

- New book, #PortraitPositive, features women with disfigurements, marks, scars and conditions to challenge the status quo
- Ambassadors from charity, Changing Faces, were dressed by fashion designer Steven Tai and shot by world renowned photographer, Rankin, and feature in the book
- TV presenter Gail Porter hosts the book launch event to support UK charity Changing Faces

Tuesday 25 September, London: The fashion industry will be brought face-to-face with its narrow standards of beauty through a unique collaboration between world-renowned photographer Rankin, designer Steven Tai and the charity Changing Faces.

The Portrait Positive project, conceived by Stephen Bell, challenges perceptions of beauty through a series of striking images of 16 different women with visible facial and bodily differences, shot by Rankin and dressed in designs by Steven Tai.

The Portrait Positive images have been collated into a book of the same name, designed by Carter Studio—proceeds from the sales of which will go to support Changing Faces' work across the country. TV presenter and fashion blogger Gail Porter will launch the Portrait Positive book on Tuesday 25 September at a celebratory event in support of the campaign, and the charity. The book will be available to purchase on the Portrait Positive website as well as select stores, boutique and art spaces across the UK.

Changing Faces is the leading charity for 1.3 million children, young people and adults in the UK who have a medical condition, mark or scar that makes them look different. Approximately one in 111 people in the UK have a significant visible facial difference, despite being largely absent from representations in fashion and the media.

Rankin said:

"Living with a visible difference you are literally judged by your appearance and compared to what I think is a fake idea of what it is to be beautiful or even 'normal'. The only way to shift this perception is to talk about it and face it head on. Our amazing subjects are dealing with these issues with grace, dignity and strength. It was an absolute honour to work with them and try to create a discussion around what it is to be beautiful. To me they are all unique."

Gail Porter said:

"I'm thrilled to have the honour of hosting the Portrait Positive launch night. It's such an important cause and one that is particularly pertinent to me given my experiences of living with Alopecia. Seeing these brilliant

women taking a stand and being photographed by Rankin; celebrating and highlighting their differences has been so powerful to behold. This campaign is so needed in today's society, to shape attitudes and encourage not just the fashion industry, but wider society to see the value in what makes us different, and redefine beauty in the public eye."

Becky Hewitt, CEO Changing Faces said:

"As a charity that supports people with visible differences, we are delighted to be part of a movement that challenges the way the fashion industry represents difference. We want to break down barriers and change the narrow view of beauty that exists in society, especially in the fashion industry. These amazing images by Rankin will help to address the stigma around 'looking different' and show that true beauty is about being proud to be yourself. We want to see brands, publications and designers work with real people of all appearances so that fashion is accessible to all."

Three of the 16 women that took part in the shoot with Rankin shared their thoughts on being part of the Portrait Positive project;

Raiche, Charity Worker and Burns Survivor, London

'We live in a world where people with differences are under-represented and misunderstood, from scars, to skin colour, to abilities and everything in between. We need to start that conversation, embrace our differences and help other to realise that times are changing - what makes you different is what makes you most beautiful.'

Chloe, Student who has a port wine stain birthmark, Bath

'I understand what it feels like to grow up with a condition which eternally marks you out as 'different' from everyone else. I think that living in a society which places so much pressure on looking a certain way can, at times, make things very difficult. It is so important for people to support one another in whatever ways they can. We need to improve the general understanding and acceptance of disfigurement and remove the stigma attached to it.'

Rhona, Student, who has a cleft lip and palate, Liverpool

'A condition like mine should not hold you back, anything is possible. It doesn't make any difference to my everyday life.'

'This has motivated me to work with charities like Changing Faces more, so I can help anti-bullying initiatives and encourage children growing up with clefts to become comfortable in themselves.'







